ABSTRACT

The present invention is directed towards a conveyor system for transporting a printing plate in a platemaking system, where the conveyor system includes: a carriage riding on a track and one or more low friction substantially horizontal planar support surfaces provided as a high wear laminate, positioned above the carriage and the track, for supporting the printing plate on the non-emulsion side without the use of rollers, belts, bearings or air cushioning. The carriage includes one or more engagement mechanisms for engaging a bottom, non-emulsion side of the printing plate, said track comprising an air cylinder. The engagement mechanisms can be, for example, suctions cups which engage the plate by a vacuum, suction cups which engage the plate by pressure and adhesion, other adhesive devices, or a mechanical gripper for gripping the plate. The track or linear actuating system is preferably an air cylinder. Alternatively the linear actuating system could include a belt and pulleys, a chain and gears, or a threaded lead screw.